

Claims

What is claimed is:

- 5 1) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session, comprising the steps of:
- instantiating a first instant messaging client on a first network access device, said first network access device being remote from a hosted application server, said first network access device participating in a hosted network application;
- 10 establishing a communications path from the first network access device to a second network access device, said second network access device running a second instant messaging client, said second instant messaging client being communicably connected to said first instant messaging client via a network, said communications path for communicating information using an instant messaging protocol between the first and
- 15 second network access devices; and
- using an instant messaging protocol to communicate hosted application information to the second network access device, said information comprising parameters for sharing the hosted application session being participated in by the first network access device.

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2) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 1, wherein said hosted application information comprises port information for accessing a hosted application session to be shared.

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3) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 1, wherein said hosted application information comprises protocol information for accessing a hosted application session to be shared.

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4) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 1, wherein said hosted application information comprises access authorization information for accessing a hosted application session to be shared.

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5) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 1, wherein said hosted application information is masked to prevent said information from being readily discernible by a user of the first or second network access device.

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6) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session comprising the steps of:

instantiating a first instant messaging client on a first network access device, said first network access device being remote from a hosted application server, said first

5 network access device participating in a hosted network application;

establishing a communications path from the first network access device to a second network access device, said second network access device running a second instant messaging client, said second instant messaging client being communicably connected to said first instant messaging client via a network; and

10 receiving a request to issue an invitation from the first network access device to the second network access device, said invitation inviting a user of the second network access device to participate in a shared hosted application session through the second network access device.

15 7) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 6, further comprising the step of determining whether a hosted application is shareable before issuing an invitation to the second network access device.

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8) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 7, wherein the step of determining whether a hosted application session is shareable comprises determining whether the hosted application server is capable of supporting a shared hosted application session.

9) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 6, further comprising the step of determining whether the second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session before allowing an invitation to be communicated to the second network access device.

10) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 9, wherein the step of determining whether the second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session comprises determining whether the second network access device has compatible hosted application sharing software installed.

11) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 9, wherein the step of determining whether the second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session comprises determining whether the second network access device is able to access the hosted application server in accordance with hosted application information communicated to the second network access device.

12) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 11, wherein the step of determining whether the second network access device is able to access the hosted application server comprises instantiating a server access attempt from the second network access device to the hosted application server to determine whether the second network access device is capable of communicating with a port on a hosted application server in accordance with the hosted application information.

13) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 6, further comprising the step of determining whether a network access device should be invited to share a hosted application session, said determination being dependant upon the performance capability of the network access device.

14) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 13, wherein the determination is dependant upon a graphical display resolution of the network access device.

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15) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 13, wherein the determination is dependant upon the bandwidth of the network connection between the network access device and the hosted application server.

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16) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 6, further comprising the step of communicating hosted network application information to the second network access device, wherein said hosted network application information is masked to prevent said information from being readily discernible by a user of the second network access device.

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17) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 16, wherein said hosted application information is encrypted while being communicated to the second network access device.

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18) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 16, wherein said hosted application information comprises access authorization information.

5 19) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 16, wherein said access authorization information is unique to a hosted application sharing session.

20) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow
10 sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 16, wherein said hosted application information is communicated to said second network access device via said first network access device, and further wherein said hosted application information is masked to prevent said information from being readily discernible by a user of the first network access device.

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21) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 6, wherein said hosted application information comprises role information for defining a participants authority to interact with a shared hosted application.

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22) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 21, wherein said role information may be used to alternate control of a shared hosted application session between a first network access device and a second network access device.

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23) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 21, wherein a user is associated with a network access device, said user having an identity, and wherein said role information is dependant on the identity of the user.

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24) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session comprising the steps of:

instantiating a first instant messaging client on a first network access device, said first network access device being remote from a hosted application server,

5 said first network access device participating in a hosted network application;

establishing a communications path from a second network access device to the first network access device, said second network access device having a second network connection, said network connection having a band width, said second network access device further running a second instant messaging client, said second instant
10 messaging client being communicably connected to said first instant messaging client via the network connection, said communications path for communicating hosted application information using an instant messaging protocol between the first and second network access devices; and

receiving at the first network access device a request from the second
15 network access device, said request requesting communication of hosted network application information to the second network access device to allow the second network access device to participate in a shared hosted application session.

25) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 24, further comprising the step of determining whether a hosted application can be shared before communicating hosted application information to the second network access device.

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26) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 25, wherein the step of determining whether a hosted application session can be shared comprises determining whether the hosted application server is capable of supporting a shared hosted application session.

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27) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 25, further comprising the step of determining whether the second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session before communicating hosted application information to the second network access device.

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28) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 27, wherein the step of determining whether the second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session before communicating hosted application information to the second network access device comprises determining whether the second network access device has compatible hosted application sharing software installed.

29) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 27, wherein the step of determining whether the second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session before communicating hosted application information to the second network access device comprises determining whether the second network access device is able to access the hosted application server in accordance with hosted application information communicated to the second network access device.

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30) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 29, wherein the step of determining whether the second network access device is able to access the hosted application server comprises instantiating a server access attempt from the second
5 network access device to the hosted application server to determine whether the second network access device is capable of communicating with a port on a hosted application server in accordance with the hosted application information.

31) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow
10 sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 24, further comprising the step of determining whether hosted application information should be communicated to the second network access device in response to a request, said determination being dependant upon the performance capability of the second network access device.

32) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow
15 sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 31, wherein the determination is dependant upon the graphical display resolution of the network access device.

33) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted network application session according to claim 31, wherein the determination is dependant upon the bandwidth of the second network connection.

5 34) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 24, further comprising the step of communicating hosted application information to the second network access device, wherein said hosted application information is masked to prevent said information from being readily discernible by a user of the second network access device.

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35) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 34, wherein said hosted network application information is encrypted while being communicated to the second network access device.

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36) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 34, wherein said hosted application information is communicated to said second network access device via said first network access device, and further wherein said hosted application information is masked to prevent said information from being readily discernible by a user of the first network access device.

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37) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 34, wherein said hosted application information comprises access authorization information.

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38) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 37, wherein said access authorization information is unique to a hosted application sharing session.

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39) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 24, wherein said hosted application information comprises role information, said role information defining the authority of a network access device to interact with a shared hosted application.

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40) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 39, wherein said role information is used to alternate control of a shared hosted application session between a first network access device and a second network access device.

41) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 39, wherein a user is associated with a network access device, said user having an identity, and wherein said role information is dependant on the identity of the user.

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42) A method for providing assistance for a hosted application to an accessor of the hosted application from a support network access device, comprising the steps of:

instantiating an instant messaging client on a network access device being used by the accessor;

10 instantiating an instant messaging client on a support network access device;

receiving a support request from the accessor network access device, said accessor network access device accessing a hosted application from a remote location, said request being a request for assistance for an on-going hosted application session;

15 communicating to the support network access device hosted application information using an instant messaging protocol, said hosted application information comprising information for allowing the support network access device to share the on-going hosted application session; and

20 instantiating an access to the on-going hosted application session on the support network access device, said access causing the hosted application session to become shared with the support network access device.

43) A method for providing accessor assistance for a hosted application according to claim 42, wherein the hosted application information comprises port identification information, said port identification information comprising identification of at least one port on a hosted application server, said hosted application server hosting the on-going hosted application session.

44) A method for providing accessor assistance for a hosted application according to claim 42, wherein the hosted application information comprises role information, said role information defining the authority of a network access device to interact with a shared hosted application.

45) A method for providing accessor assistance for a hosted application according to claim 44, wherein said role information may be used to alternate control of a shared hosted application session between said accessor network access device and said support network access device.

46) A method for providing accessor assistance according to claim 48, wherein an accessor is associated with the accessor network access device, said accessor having an identity, and wherein said role information is dependant on the identity of the accessor.

47) A method for providing accessor assistance for a hosted application according to claim 42, wherein said hosted application information is masked to prevent said information from being readily discernible by a user of the support network access device.

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48) A method for providing customer assistance for a hosted application according to claim 42, wherein said hosted application information is masked to prevent said information from being readily discernible by a user of the accessing network access device.

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49) A method for providing accessor assistance for a hosted application according to claim 42, wherein said hosted network application information is encrypted while being communicated to the support network access device.

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50) A method for providing accessor assistance for a hosted application according to claim 42, wherein said hosted application information comprises access authorization information.

51) A method for providing accessor assistance for a hosted application according to claim 50, wherein said access authorization information is unique to the support request.

52) A method for providing a hosted application training session, said training session including shared access to a hosted application session between at least one trainer and at least one trainee, said method comprising the steps of:

5 instantiating a hosted application session from a trainer's network access device, said hosted application session hosted by a remote hosted application server, said trainer's network access device being connected to a communications network, said remote hosted application server also being connected to the network;

10 instantiating an instant messaging client on the at least one trainer's network access device;

instantiating an instant messaging client on at least one trainee's network access device, said network access device having a trainee's connection to the communications network, said trainee's network connection having a bandwidth;

15 communicating to the at least one trainee's network access device a capability verification request;

determining whether said at least one trainee's network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application training session; and

when it is determined that said at least one trainee's network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session, communicating to the at
20 least one trainee's network access device hosted application information, said hosted

application information comprising information allowing the at least one trainee's network access device to share a hosted application training session.

53) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 52, wherein said capability verification request comprises application server port information, and wherein said determination of whether said at least one trainee's network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application training session comprises determining whether the at least one trainee's network access device is capable of communicating with the hosted application server via the application server port information.

54) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 52, wherein performance capabilities of a trainee's network access device affect performance of a shared application training session, said effect being quantifiable as an amount, wherein said determination of whether said at least one trainee's network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application training session is dependant on the amount that said at least one trainee's network access device will restrict performance of the shared hosted application session.

55) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 54, wherein performance capabilities of a trainee's network access device affect performance of a shared application training session, said effect being quantifiable as an amount, wherein the amount that said at least one trainee's network access device will restrict performance of the shared hosted application session is dependant on the bandwidth of the at least one trainee's network connection.

56) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 54, wherein performance capabilities of a trainee's network access device affect performance of a shared application training session, said effect being quantifiable as an amount, wherein the amount that said at least one trainee's network access device will restrict performance of the shared hosted application session is dependant on an ability of the trainee's network access device to display information associated with the hosted application session.

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57) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 52, wherein said determination of whether said at least one trainee's network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application training session comprises determining whether the at least one trainee's network access device has adequate software installed to allow said at least one trainee's network access device to share a hosted application session.

58) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 52, wherein the step of communicating to said at least one trainee's network access device a capability verification request occurs in response to a request from the at least one trainee's network access device to participate in a shared hosted application training session.

59) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 52, wherein the step of communicating to said at least one trainee's network access device a capability verification request occurs in response to a request from the at least one trainer's network access device to invite a user to participate in a shared hosted application training session.

60) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 52, wherein the step of communicating to said at least one trainee's network access device a capability verification request further comprises masking the capability verification request such that it is not readily discernible to a user of said at least one trainee's network access device.

61) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 52, wherein the step of communicating to said at least one trainee's network access device a capability verification request further comprises the step of encrypting the capability verification request prior to
5 communicating the capability verification request to said at least one trainee's network access device.

62) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 52, wherein the step of communicating to
10 said at least one trainee's network access device hosted application information further comprises masking the hosted application information such that it is not readily discernible to a user of said at least one trainee's network access device.

63) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted
15 application training session according to claim 52, wherein the step of communicating to said at least one trainee's network access device hosted application information further comprises the step of encrypting the hosted application information prior to communicating the capability verification request to said at least one trainee's network access device.

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64) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 52, wherein said hosted application information for allowing said at least one trainee's network access device to share a hosted application training session further comprises role information, said role information defining authority of a network access device to interact with a shared hosted application training session.

65) A method for providing hosted application information to enable a hosted application training session according to claim 64, wherein said role information is used to alternate control of a shared hosted application session between a trainer's network access device and a trainee's network access device.

66) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 64, wherein at least one trainee is associated with said at least one trainee's network access device, said at least one trainee having an identity, and wherein authority associated with said role information is dependant on the identity of the at least one trainee.

67) A method for communicating hosted application information to allow sharing of a hosted application session according to claim 64, wherein at least one trainer is associated with said at least one trainer's network access device, said at least one trainer having an identity, and wherein authority associated with said role information is
5 dependant on the identity of the at least one trainer.

68) A method for providing a shared hosted application session, wherein said session is shared among a plurality of shared hosted application participants; comprising the steps of:

- 10 instantiating a hosted application session on a first network access device associated with a first application participant, said hosted application session being hosted by an application hosting server;
- instantiating an instant messaging client on said first network access device;
- using said instant messaging client to establish a communications path to at least a
15 second network access device associated with at least a second participant, said second network access device having a second connection to the network, said second network connection having a bandwidth;
- communicating to said at least second network access device a capability verification request;
- 20 determining whether said second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session;

when it is determined that said second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session, communicating to the at least second participant via the communications path an invitation to share the hosted application session;

when it is determined that said second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session, determining whether the at least second participant desires to participate in a shared hosted application session;

when it is determined that said second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session and that said at least second participant desires to participate in a shared hosted application session, communicating to said second network access device hosted application information, said hosted application information for allowing said second network access device to share a hosted application session; and

when it is determined that said second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session and that said at least second participant desires to participate in a shared hosted application session, instantiating an access to the shared application session on said at least second network access device in accordance with the communicated hosted application information.

69) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 68, wherein said capability verification request comprises application server port information, and wherein said determination of whether said second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session comprises
5 determining whether said second network access device is capable of communicating with the hosted application server via the application server port information.

70) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 68, wherein performance capabilities of a network access device affect
10 performance of a shared application session, said effect being quantifiable as an amount, wherein said determination of whether said second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session is dependant on the amount that said second network access device will restrict performance of the shared hosted application session.

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71) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 70, wherein the amount that said second network access device will restrict performance of the shared hosted application session is dependant on the bandwidth of the second network connection.

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72) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 70, wherein the amount that said second network access device will restrict performance of the shared hosted application session is dependant on an ability of the second network access device to display information associated with the hosted
5 application session.

73) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 68, wherein said determination of whether said second network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application session comprises determining
10 whether said second network access device has adequate software installed to allow said second network access device to participate in a shared hosted application session.

74) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 68, wherein the step of communicating to said second network access device a
15 capability verification request further comprises masking the capability verification request such that it is not readily discernible to said second participant.

75) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 68, wherein the step of communicating to said second network access device a capability verification request further comprises the step of encrypting the capability verification request prior to communicating the capability verification request to said
5 second network access device.

76) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 68, wherein the step of communicating to said second network access device hosted application information further comprises masking the hosted application
10 information such that it is not readily discernible to said second participant.

77) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 68, wherein the step of communicating to said second network access device hosted application information further comprises the step of encrypting the hosted
15 application information prior to communicating the hosted application information to said second network access device.

78) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 68, wherein the step of communicating hosted application information to said second network access device further comprises the step of communicating the hosted application to the second network access device from the first network access device, the
5 method further comprising the step of masking the hosted application information such that it is not readily discernible to a user of said first network access device.

79) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 68, wherein the step of communicating hosted application information to said
10 second network access device further comprises the step of communicating the hosted application to the first network access device before the hosted application information is communicated to the second network access device, and wherein the step of communicating hosted application information to said first network access device further comprises the step of encrypting the hosted application information prior to
15 communicating the hosted application information to said first network access device.

80) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 68, wherein said hosted application information for allowing said second network access device to share a hosted application session further comprises role information,
20 said role information defining the authority of said second network access device to interact with a shared hosted application session.

81) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 80, wherein said role information is used to alternate control of a shared hosted application session between said first network access device and said second network access device.

82) A method for providing a shared hosted application session according to claim 80, wherein said second participant has an identity, and wherein said role information is dependant on said identity.

83) A computer-readable medium tangibly embodying instructions which, when executed by a network access device, implement a process comprising the steps of:

causing an instant messaging service to be instantiated on a first network access device, said first network access device having a first network connection to a network;

causing the instantiated instant messaging service to establish a communications path with a remote network access device, said remote network access device having a second network connection to a the network;

receiving at the first network access device a capability verification request;

determining whether the first network access device meets capability requirements, said capability requirements identified in the capability verification request;

communicating to the remote network access device whether the first network access device meets capability requirements;
when the first network access device meets capability requirements, receiving at the first network access device hosted application information; and

5 when said hosted application information indicates an available hosted application, attempting to establish a hosted application session with the available hosted application.

84) A computer-readable medium tangibly embodying instructions according
10 to claim 83, wherein said capability verification request comprises application server port information, and wherein said determination of whether the first network access device meets capability requirements comprises determining whether the first network access device is capable of communicating with a hosted application server via the application server port information.

85) A computer-readable medium tangibly embodying instructions according
15 to claim 84, wherein performance capabilities of said first network access device affect performance of a shared hosted application session, said affect being quantifiable as an amount, and wherein said determination of whether the first network access device meets
20 capability requirements is dependant on the amount that said first network access device will restrict performance of a shared hosted application session.

86) A computer-readable medium tangibly embodying instructions according to claim 85, wherein the amount that said first network access device will restrict performance of a shared hosted application session is dependant on the bandwidth of the first network connection.

87) A computer-readable medium tangibly embodying instructions according to claim 85, said first network access device having a capability to display information associated with a hosted application session, wherein the amount that said first network access device will restrict performance of a shared hosted application session is dependant on said capability of the first network access device to display information associated with a hosted application session.

88) A computer-readable medium tangibly embodying instructions according to claim 83, wherein said determination of whether said first network access device is capable of participating in a shared hosted application training session comprises determining whether said first network access device has adequate software installed to allow said first network access device to share a hosted application session.

89) A computer-readable medium tangibly embodying instructions according to claim 83, said instructions implementing a process further comprising the step of decrypting hosted application information when received hosted application information is encrypted.

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90) A computer-readable medium tangibly embodying instructions according to claim 83, said instructions implementing a process further comprising the step of receiving role information, said role information identifying the authority of the network access device to interact with a shared hosted application session.

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91) A computer readable medium tangibly embodying instructions according to claim 83, said instructions implementing a process further comprising the step of controlling interaction between a computer executing the process and a shared hosted application.

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92) A computer readable medium tangibly embodying instructions according to claim 91, wherein the step of controlling interaction is dependant on an identity associated with a user of the computer executing the process.

93) A computer readable medium tangibly embodying instructions according to claim 91, wherein said hosted application information comprises role information, and the step of controlling interaction is dependant on said role information.